



# MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani  
was published in  
the MidWeek **CENTRAL VOICE**  
section on Wednesday, April 5, 2017.

## Excellence in School Leadership

Congratulations to **Elynne Chung, Principal at Mililani Middle School!** She is one of 14 nominees for this year's **Masayuki Tokioka Excellence in School Leadership Award**. The annual award, named for the founder of Island Insurance, honors outstanding campus leaders who establish a firm focus on learning and student achievement with the support of teachers and families. Principal Chung has been recognized previously for her innovative programs at Mililani Middle. We are so grateful that our students and families benefit from her leadership. This year's Tokioka Leader will be announced later this month at a banquet sponsored by the Public Schools of Hawaii Foundation. *Fingers crossed for Principal Chung!*



## Notes from the Capitol



Our Legislative session remains on track to adjourn about a month from now – May 4. At the end of this week, the Senate will be “decking” House bills that we have been considering - and in some cases amending - so that they are positioned for final votes. For the most part, committee hearings on bills have been completed, while resolutions and our consideration of nominees for numerous positions are still on the agenda. Public input is still possible by contacting the legislators who represent your neighborhoods to let them know your positions on the issues.

I regret that the House Committee on Health deferred our **Senate Bill 1129** that would legalize physician assisted dying as a matter of individual choice. Earlier, on a vote of 22-3, the Senate overwhelmingly approved these changes in the law that have been the subject of exhaustive hearings and community discussion for many years. The bill may be considered again in next year's Legislative session – even without further hearings. My hope is that House members will allow the bill to move forward for a vote.

Other critical matters remain unsettled. These include my proposed constitutional amendment to allow a state property tax surcharge on investment homes assessed at more than \$2 million to fund our public schools; other measures to support education from pre-K to the University of Hawaii; further support for the City's rail project; formulating approaches to affordable housing; and assistance for the homeless.

*Continued next page . . .*

All through the session it is possible to follow bills and issues online at the Legislature’s website – <http://capitol.hawaii.gov>. I encourage you to do so, and, of course, you may contact my office for assistance.

### Stars on stage

Kudos to the **Central Theatre Arts Academy (CTAA)** – headquartered at **Mililani High School** – for their wonderful performances of *The Little Mermaid* last month. I was in the audience for the Saturday matinee, and the music and cast performances were so outstanding.

The Academy was founded two decades ago with the goal of offering performing arts opportunities for Mililani, Leilehua and Waialua High School students. In 2009, the Academy expanded its vision to include students from public schools all over the district and beyond. CTAA receives state funding through the DOE as a Performing Arts Learning Center like programs at Castle and Kaimuki High. It provides a comprehensive education in theatre production – including performance, design, construction, and technical theater.

The spring production at Pearl City Cultural Center was the first time the Academy has staged a production away from Mililani High. First-time director **Cari Taira** – herself an alum of the program – did a wonderful job of leading the ensemble through the classic script. She says venturing out like this is “the only way to grow the program and the mindset and skill level of our students.”

The Academy stages two major productions each school year – a “straight play” in the fall and a musical in the spring. Watch for notices of their next show – you won’t want to miss it!

